

"The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, NAFEO, is appreciative to Senators Coons and Rosen for heeding NAFEO's appeal for a bipartisan group of Members of Congress to explore ways of incentivizing a greater number of colleges and universities to educate the growing populations of this nation—low-income and racial and ethnic minority students, and rewarding those institutions graduating disproportionate percentages of the growing populations of the states. The ASPIRE legislation will move the nation toward acknowledging and rewarding institutions like HBCUs and MSIs graduating disproportionate percentages of low-income students, first generation students, and students of color."

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education CEO, Lezli Baskerville

"SEARAC strongly supports the ASPIRE Act and its goals to increasing low-income students' access to a post-secondary education and the graduation rates for all students. This proposal helps to address the compounded socio-economic and educational disparities that we know are persisting in Southeast Asian American communities who experience both poverty and lack-of higher education degrees at higher rates than the national average. We applaud Sen. Coons for introducing a policy solution to stand up for vulnerable students such as Southeast Asian Americans from refugee, immigrant, and low-income communities."

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Executive Director, Quyen Dinh

"Smart policy solutions that help more of today's students access a college education and earn high-quality degrees can cultivate thriving communities. The ASPIRE Act will help to narrow the access and degree completion inequities that stubbornly persist within our higher education system and enable more hardworking students, regardless of economic status, to pursue a college education. We thank Senator Coons and Senator Rosen for their leadership and commitment to expanding college access and fostering degree completion."

Institute for Higher Education Policy President, Michelle Asha Cooper, PhD

"The urgent question for higher education right now is "How can we dramatically increase high-quality degree completion while expanding – not limiting – access among low-income students and students of color?" The ASPIRE Act represents an attempt to answer that question in a cost-neutral way that puts students first and pushes institutions to focus on getting students to graduation. It will spur wealthier institutions to increase access for low-income students, and it will provide additional resources to drive improvements in colleges and universities -- including minority-serving institutions -- that make commitments to significantly improving outcomes for their students. This kind of forward-thinking legislation is an important step toward making higher education more equitable and effective."

The Education Trust Vice President of Higher Education Policy and Practice, Wil Del Pilar

"As a university leader, I believe it is vital to increase degree completion rates by providing the comprehensive support necessary to achieve this goal. Furthermore, we must continue our work to optimize access to higher education for all students. Access and degree completion are essential to the quality of our society and the strength of our nation."

Widener University President Julie E. Wollman

“The ASPIRE Act is supported by Wilmington University because the intent of this bill is to increase access for low-income and marginalized students to close the completion gap in institutions of higher education. This is critically important to us, since approximately 46 percent of our first-time, full-time students are PELL Grant recipients, and the ASPIRE Act gives students the opportunity to experience a quality education they can afford. Wilmington University is a student-centered organization, and we work diligently to provide for our students sound financial counseling as well as rigorous academic programs that prepare them to make meaningful contributions to their communities and in the workforce. We are committed to offering education to all who seek it, and the ASPIRE Act aligns with our commitment to excellence in teaching, relevancy of curriculum, and individual attention to all students, regardless of their economic limitations.”

Wilmington University President Dr. LaVerne Harmon

“The ASPIRE Act is key to promoting educational opportunity and access to the nation’s colleges and universities, and Wesley College is proud to support initiatives that increase the higher education options available to students. Better still, the legislation introduced by Senator Coons will further bolster efforts to enhance student success and increase graduation rates. Each student who succeeds benefits our local communities and the country as a whole.”

Wesley College Provost, Dr. Jeffrey Gibson

“The Completion Bonus Program within the ASPIRE Act further incentivizes institutions to redouble their efforts to boost retention and graduation rates to help make the United States #1 in college completion.”

Thurgood Marshall College Fund President, Dr. Harry L. Williams

“We are grateful to Senator Coons and Senator Rosen for recognizing that a large number of our nation’s postsecondary institutions are failing to serve as true mobility machines for millions of low- and moderate-income students. Far too many students who enter college today do not graduate, and too many of our elite institutions aren’t doing enough to take in the Pell students who could benefit from their high graduation rates and solid post-graduation outcomes. While the ASPIRE Act may not be able to fix all of these problems overnight, it refocuses attention on both access and completion by incentivizing good schools to open their doors to more low-income students while holding accountable those schools that fail to better their students’ lives.”

Third Way Vice President for Social Policy & Politics, Lanae Erickson

“We have charter school leaders that spend 12 years preparing low-income students for college. The ASPIRE Act would help fulfill the promise we make to these students, and show that hard work, discipline and resilience have their rewards.”

DE Charter Schools Network Executive Director, Kendall Massett and Board President, Chuck Taylor

"At Delaware State University, we are committed to retaining and graduating first-generation college students. This commitment is further evidenced by our steady progression on these most-important metrics and our partnerships with private foundations to expand our innovative efforts to retain and graduate our students. The Completion Bonus Program within the ASPIRE Act further incentivizes institutions to redouble their efforts to boost retention and graduation rates to help make the United States #1 in college completion."

Delaware State University President Dr. Harry L. Williams

"We urge Congress to give serious consideration to the effort by Senator Coons aimed directly at improving completion rates. Part of the 'Access Success and Persistence in Reshaping Education (ASPIRE)' Act is designed to identify institutions that are doing a poor job of graduating students compared with their peers. We must do a better job of educating students about the importance of completion rates, and we must hold institutions accountable when they fail to get their students not just into, but through, college."

Princeton University President Christopher Eisgruber

"HBCUs are working hard every day to ensure that both young people of color and those from low-income backgrounds have access to a high quality education. By targeting resources to ensure that all students can complete college, ASPIRE will be a critical tool in the toolbox of colleges like South Carolina State and other institutions that serve disproportionate percentages of both students of color and low-income students. I hope that it becomes part of the Higher Education Act reauthorization bill."

South Carolina State University President James E. Clark

"The intent of the ASPIRE Act aligns with the University of Delaware's commitment to provide an accessible and affordable world-class education to every student, especially those with the greatest financial need. Thousands of Delawareans benefit from UD's financial aid and academic support, which contribute to above-average retention and graduation rates. We applaud the senators' efforts to address this complex challenge."

University of Delaware President Dennis Assanis

"The University of California is proud of its successes in enrolling students from a broad range of family income levels, and of its record in making a difference for low-income students who earn UC degrees. UC supports the ASPIRE Act's targeted approach to providing incentives to colleges and universities to increase their enrollment of low-income students, and offering competitive funds to under-resourced institutions trying to improve their rates of student completion. The University's exemplary record and strong commitment to educational opportunity for all students are a result of UC's continuous drive to uphold its mission as a public university, with regard to access, affordability, and educational quality."

University of California President Janet Napolitano